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THE  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE  
**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

TO THE  
**LOOE URBAN DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

**FOR THE YEAR 1903.**

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JOHN PHILP, PRINTER, LISKEARD.



# LOOE URBAN DISTRICT.

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AREA - 547 ACRES.      POPULATION (CENSUS 1901) - 2,535.

ESTIMATED POPULATION - - 2,560.

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*To the Looe Urban District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary State of this District.

Notwithstanding the very abnormal rainfall with which we have been provided—a rainfall which has interfered with our amusements and made the business of the lives of many of us somewhat of a burden—yet the question of the good health enjoyed by our community is a matter of very sincere congratulation. On first looking at the fact that with a greatly increased rainfall we have enjoyed exceptionally good health, we should be disposed to draw the deduction that a great rainfall diminishes disease. Though such a deduction is by no means universally true, yet it does hold good for a town like ours, and the great rainfall has proved a blessing to the community. I have endeavoured to press on the attention of the Council in my former reports that some of the sickness from which we have in past days suffered was caused by deficient drains and bad drainage, and to our help in this respect a rainfall of 49·8 inches for the year has come, diminishing our sickness. The flow and ebb of the tide here is a potent factor in improving our sanitary conditions: the great rainfall has, of course, given us a fuller river and contributed to the better washing of the banks and to the better scouring of the river-bed. When laying new drains in the lower levels, it was clearly demonstrated how the subsoil is regularly washed by the rise and fall of each tide.

The Zymotic Disease-rate compares favourably with that of last year. For the year the rate works out at 2·74 per thousand of the population, against 4·31 during the previous year. While, however, the whole Zymotic Disease-rate is more favourable, I desire to draw attention to the fact that there is no diminution in the number of the cases of Enteric Fever. As I pointed out last year, the incidence of Enteric Fever is known to bear a direct relationship to a good or faulty system of drainage. We cannot feel quite happy as long as Enteric Fever lingers in our midst. No case of Scarlet Fever has occurred in this District. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that no death from any infectious disease which is subject to notification, has occurred during the year.

The total death-rate of 11·32 per 1,000 is below the average recorded during the last five years. Out of the total number of deaths recorded—29—no less than fifteen took place at ages varying from 70 to 94 years. The practical absence of infantile mortality is a subject of great satisfaction. It is undoubtedly due to the mothers having a better knowledge on the question of infantile feeding.

### PHYSICAL FEATURES AND CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.

The great beauty and great variety in the scenery of this district are year after year becoming known to a larger number of our fellow-men. Of the health-giving nature of our air and climate there can be no question, and the facilities which exist here for safe boating both on the sea and river, for deep-sea fishing and for sea bathing, are becoming more widely appreciated. To all lovers of nature, but specially to the botanist and student of the marine fauna, our neighbourhood offers a field that will add a peculiar charm to the ordinary joys of the annual holiday.

### HOUSE ACCOMMODATION, &c.

With reference to the house accommodation of our town, undoubtedly better houses are required for those who follow the fishing industry. It is a matter of congratulation that houses, at a moderate rental, are now being erected on the higher levels. The process of rehousing is and must be a slow one, but it is very necessary. In many of the older habitations in East Looe the floors lie below the sea-level, and the want of light and air space in many of the houses results in the undermining of the health of that portion of the population on which the care of the “home” devolves, and is shown in the pale and pasty complexion and the feeling of lassitude which is not infrequently noted. All the plans for the erection of new houses are submitted to the Sanitary Committee. The laying of house-drains under the basements of houses should be altogether discouraged.

### SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

It is with much satisfaction that I am able to report that the main drain running through Market and Fore-streets and under Cobbler’s Arch has been re-laid. Much good must result from the improvement in the drainage in this congested area. In the townships, however, much needs still to be done in connection with the relaying of old drains, and I desire specially to point out the drains in the neighbourhood of the Guildhall, East Looe, and the drain from Beech Terrace, as greatly needing attention. It is almost imperative that a new drain may be provided for Beech Terrace. This new drain ought to be placed in the main-road and must also carry away the refuse from the Church Sunday School. For this School proper sanitary arrangements should be made; the present want of such conveniences is felt to be a pressing need.

I desire to again point out that the old conduits passing through the quays and opening over the quay-walls should be gradually done away with, and to recommend that they may be replaced by properly-constructed sewers which are arranged to terminate in the stream-way, even at the lowest possible tide.

Your Council has been very active in compelling the people to adopt the use of sanitary conveniences in those instances in which dwellings were

known to be without them. It is a matter of regret that the Council was unable to comply with the application which was made for the placing of sanitary conveniences in the Church Schools, West Looe. I desire most earnestly to press on the attention of the Council the existence of the defect in this building in this respect, and trust that it may be speedily remedied. It must be apparent to all the community that proper sanitary conveniences should be provided in all institutions in which classes for instruction are held. I desire to call attention to the condition of the public convenience at the base of the pier at Church-End. This convenience requires reconstruction; both it and the other public conveniences should be frequently lime-washed throughout the year.

### DISPOSAL OF REFUSE, &c.

The removal of the house refuse is still effected by open carts, which are often over-laden; they are a source, to say the least, of a very great nuisance to those who are obliged to travel in their wake. The refuse is now collected from each house every other day. Householders should be compelled to provide covered bins for their house refuse, as the open ones now generally in use are not only frequently exploited by dogs and cats, but the breeze is also at present able to distribute the germ-laden contents to the detriment of other people. May I again urge, as in former reports, the adoption of covered carts and covered bins.

### WATER SUPPLY.

We have had an ample supply of good water from the well-filled reservoirs at Wayland and Wringworthy. Both these reservoirs are supplied by springs in their vicinities; and the reservoirs are naturally protected from risks of pollution. The water is both palatable and wholesome.

### SLAUGHTER-HOUSES, &c.

The slaughter-houses, dairies, milkshops, and bakehouses have been found individually clean and well-kept when inspected. As complaints are frequently made in the summer season as to the poorness of the milk and as to its evident adulteration with water, the Sanitary Authority should take the necessary steps to have specimens of milk taken from the dairies for analysis at not infrequent intervals. I desire to again note the desirability of the establishment of a public abattoir on the outskirts of the town.

### WORKSHOPS, &c.

The sanitary conditions of the Workshops and Workplaces are satisfactory.

### ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

It is to be hoped that a scheme will be devised for the isolation of infectious diseases. An Isolation Hospital is a need of which we are all aware.

### MORTALITY.

The total number of deaths recorded during the year was 29, viz., 14 male and 15 female, the death-rate per 1,000 of the population working out at 11·32.

#### COMPARISON OF DEATH-RATES FROM 1899 TO 1903.

Year	1899	...	rate per 1,000	9·56 (corrected).
„	1900	...	„	15·86 „
„	1901	...	„	13·01 „
„	1902	...	„	16·87 „
„	1903	...	„	11·32 (estimated).

The chief causes of death were as follows:—

Influenza	...	...	...	2	Heart Disease	...	...	3
Phthisis (and other Tubercular Diseases)	4				Premature Birth	...	...	2
Cancer	...	...	...	4	Other Diseases	...	...	5
Bronchitis	...	...	...	3				—
Old Age	...	...	...	6				29

The ages at death were as follows:—

Under 1 year	...	...	...	2	15 years and under 25 years	1
1 year and under 5 years	...	...	...	0	25 years and under 65 years	7
5 years and under 15 years	...	...	...	1	65 years and upwards	18

Fifteen deaths occurred at ages over 70, viz:—One at 70, one at 71, two at 72, two at 76, two at 77, two at 78, one at 79, two at 80, one at 84, and one at 94.

Number of deaths in sub-localities:—East Looe, 16; West Looe, 13.

### INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Only two deaths occurred during the first year of life; both appear under the heading of “premature birth,” giving a death-rate per thousand births of 30·76.

#### COMPARISON OF INFANTILE MORTALITY FROM 1899 TO 1903.

Year 1899...	rate per 1,000 births	69·43	Year 1902...	rate per 1,000 births	55·45
„ 1900...	„	65·21	„ 1903...	„	30·76
„ 1901...	„	81·08			

### ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.—*Nil*.

### BIRTHS.

Sixty-five births were registered during the year—33 at East Looe, and 32 at West Looe. This is a birth-rate of 25·39 per 1,000 (estimated).

#### COMPARISON OF BIRTH-RATES FROM 1899 TO 1903.

Year 1899	...	rate per 1,000 of population	28·65 (corrected).
„ 1900	...	„	18·23
„ 1901	...	„	29·19
„ 1902	...	„	21·19
„ 1903	...	„	25·39 (estimated).

### ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

Only seven cases of Zymotic Disease were notified, viz.:—One case of Diphtheria, one case of Erysipelas, and five cases of Enteric Fever.

#### COMPARISON OF THE ZYMOTIC DISEASE-RATE FROM 1899 TO 1903.

Year 1899	...	rate per 1,000 of population	4·38
„ 1900	...	„	2·37
„ 1901	...	„	1·97
„ 1902	...	„	4·31
„ 1903	...	„	2·74

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN EUSTACE WEBB, M.B., F.R.I.P.H.,

*M.O.H. Looe Urban District Council.*

KERSWILL HOUSE, LOOE,

*29th January, 1904.*



